

Child Protection: Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults - COVID-19 College Closure

Effective for employees, students, governors and volunteers April 2020

Overall responsibility:	Principal
Implementation:	Assistant Principal Student Services
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	Pat Brennan-Barrett Principal

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1) Key Contacts

Role	Name	Email	Contact Number
Designated Safeguarding Manager	Mark Owen	mark.owen@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 734015
Designated Safeguarding Officer	Julie Kennedy	julie.kennedy@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 734244
Designated Safeguarding Officer	Emma Attree	emma.attree@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 734266
Designated Safeguarding Officer	Jo Davies	jo.davies@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 736320
Designated Safeguarding Officer	Carrie Newton	carrie.newton@northamptoncollege.ac.uk	01604 734247

2) Context

There have been significant changes within our setting and within the UK in response to the outbreak of COVID-19.

This guidance sets out some of the adjustments Northampton College is making in line with the changed arrangements in the college and following advice from government and local agencies

The current position is that, following the Government announcement, all college sites are closed and timetables have been moved to remote teaching, however, the college is making provision for delivery where need is identified amongst vulnerable groups named in this document.

Despite the changes, the College's Safeguarding Policy is fundamentally the same: the welfare of children and young people always comes first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and referrals should continue to be made in line with our established safeguarding procedure.

The pressures on children, young people and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures for a variety of reasons including through having to stay within the household, through financial hardship or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in terms of setting any work for students to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning and ability to access on line resources). Staff may be aware of the mental health of both students and their parents or carers, and should refer to safeguarding about any emerging concerns.

3) Vulnerable students

Vulnerable students include those who have an allocated social worker and those children and young people with education, health and care plans (EHCPs).

Those who have a social worker include students who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. A student may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Northampton College will continue to work with and support student's social workers to help protect vulnerable students.

We have undertaken a scoping exercise to identify the most vulnerable students and individual arrangements have been made with students who have an attached social worker and those with an EHCP.

For students subject to a Child Protection Plan and Child In Need Plan, and who have an allocated social worker: contact will be made by the safeguarding team twice weekly with these students in agreement with the family and social worker. Where families have requested this to be once per week, this has been discussed and agreed with the allocated social worker.

For students who are Looked after Children and recent Care Leavers: contact will be made by designated staff who will call daily, weekly or twice weekly as agreed with the student, carer and social worker.

For students with an EHCP: Mental Health and Wellbeing Staff , Autism Support Specialists, Dyslexia Specialists, LLN Specialists and Learning Support Assistants will maintain regular contact as agreed with student and parents / carers. Support can be delivered through individual arrangements based on curriculum activity.

For students on the edge of social care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker, or identified as high risk: contact will be made by the safeguarding team once per week for a welfare check.

NB Contact will be made remotely through telephone calls/Skype or other appropriate methods.

4) Reporting a concern

Staff should continue to follow the safeguarding procedures and advise the safeguarding team immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in college or not.

COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Please email concerns to safeguarding-team@northamptoncollege.ac.uk where a member of the safeguarding team will respond to the concern. This email address is monitored by all safeguarding staff.

Normal safeguarding procedures apply for referrals to children's services. This contact will go through a member of the safeguarding team (listed above) who will follow appropriate measures in seeking the appropriate and necessary support. Out of hours guidance can be found in the **Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy 2019-20. (Part B)**

5) New staff or volunteers

All new starters must have an on line induction. They must read the college Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Whistleblowing Policy and the staff Code of Conduct. The college will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child or young person and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

All new starters or volunteers need to confirm that they have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

6) Peer on peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a college closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other education establishments as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff may ask about relationships between learners.

7) Online safety

It is extremely important that professional boundaries do not slip during this exceptional period and protocols for on line working have been issued:

With such different arrangements in place, young people could be at greater risk of on line abuse. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The College may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when students are learning at the College. The College continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place. The College has taken on board guidance on safe remote learning and guidance for safer working practice

Staff can access further guidance here:

<https://www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-10-safeguarding-rules-teachers-home>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2020/march/undertaking-remote-teaching-safely/>

8) Mental Health

Restrictions to movement and contact with other people means students could be more likely to be

at risk of mental health problems. The Department for Education have produced guidance to support parents:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

9) Parents and Carers

Parents and carers will receive information about keeping students safe online with peers, the College, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the College's approach, including the sites students will be asked to access and named who from the college (if anyone) their student is going to be interacting with online.